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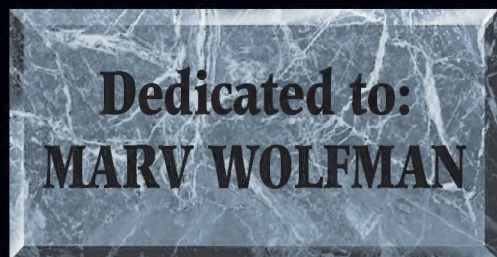
38
DEC

DIGITAL
EDITION

TONY
DANIEL
W
KEVIN
CHAPMAN
13

image® **COMICS PRESENTS:**

"MIND GAMES"



story

TODD McFARLANE
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pencils

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inks

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color

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computer color assists
ROY YOUNG

Spawn #37 Summary:

The Freak is introduced into the alleyways, and is threatened by street thugs. Spawn steps in and rescues the Freak from his attackers. As the Freak explains his origins, Spawn realizes that both of them are victims of evil men. The Freak convinces Spawn to after "Dr. Delorean" with him to avenge the murder of his entire family. Unknowingly, Spawn finds himself an accomplice to an innocent man's murder.

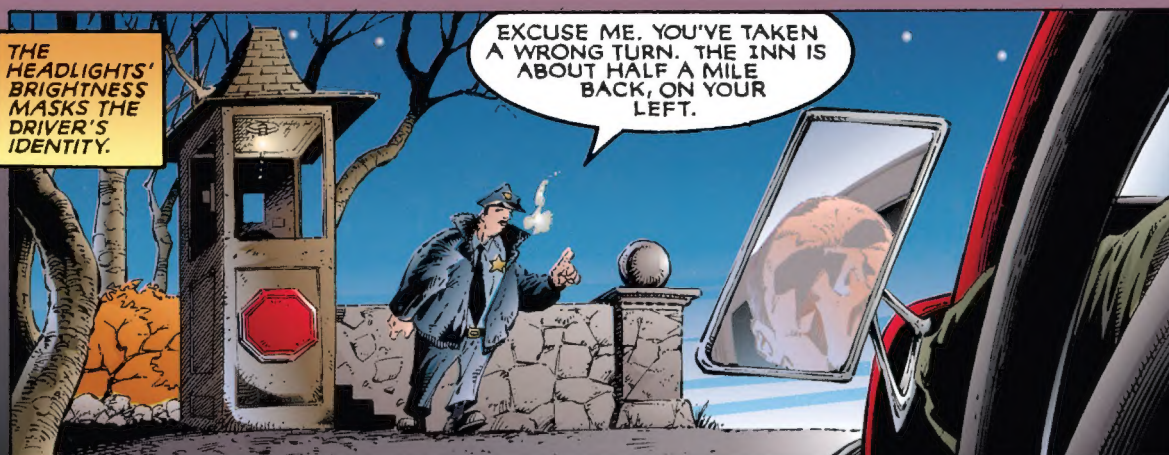
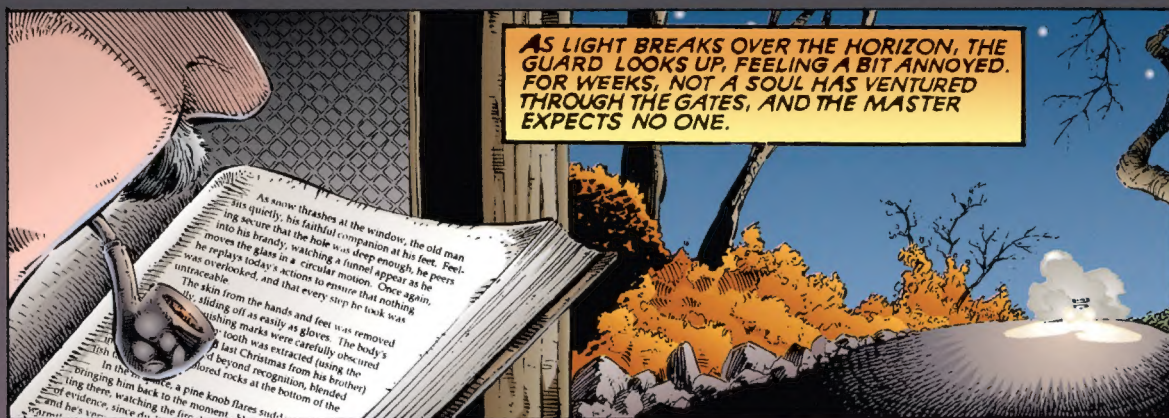
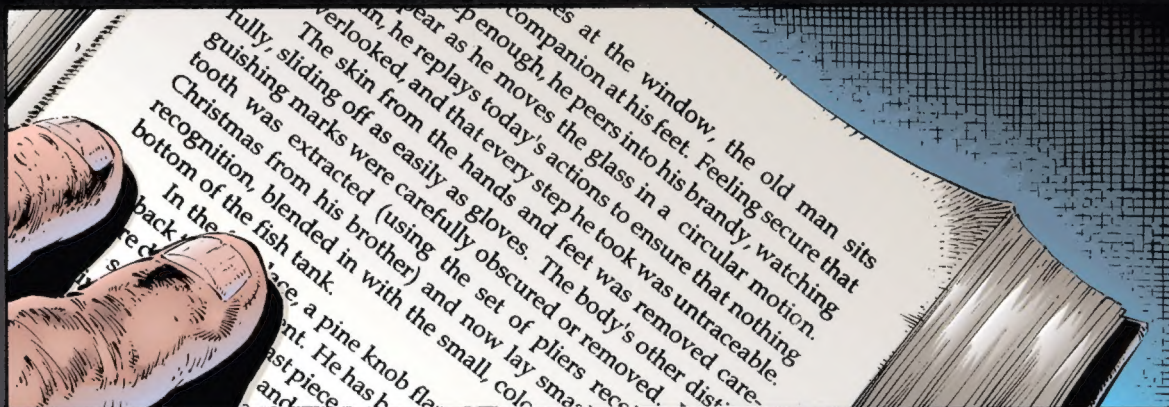
FOR IMAGE COMICS


LARRY MARDER - exec. director **TONY LOBITO** - publisher

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Director Of Creative Development: TERRY FITZGERALD.
Graphics Coordinator: JULIA SIMMONS.







I'VE COME TO SEE THE PROFESSOR.
HE'S EXPECTING ME.

I'M SORRY,
BUT MY LOG BOOK
DOESN'T SHOW ANY
VISITORS TONIGHT.
LET ME VALIDATE YOUR
I.D. BEFORE I CALL UP
TO THE HOUSE. I HAVE
STRICT ORDERS NOT
TO DISTURB THE
DOCTOR.

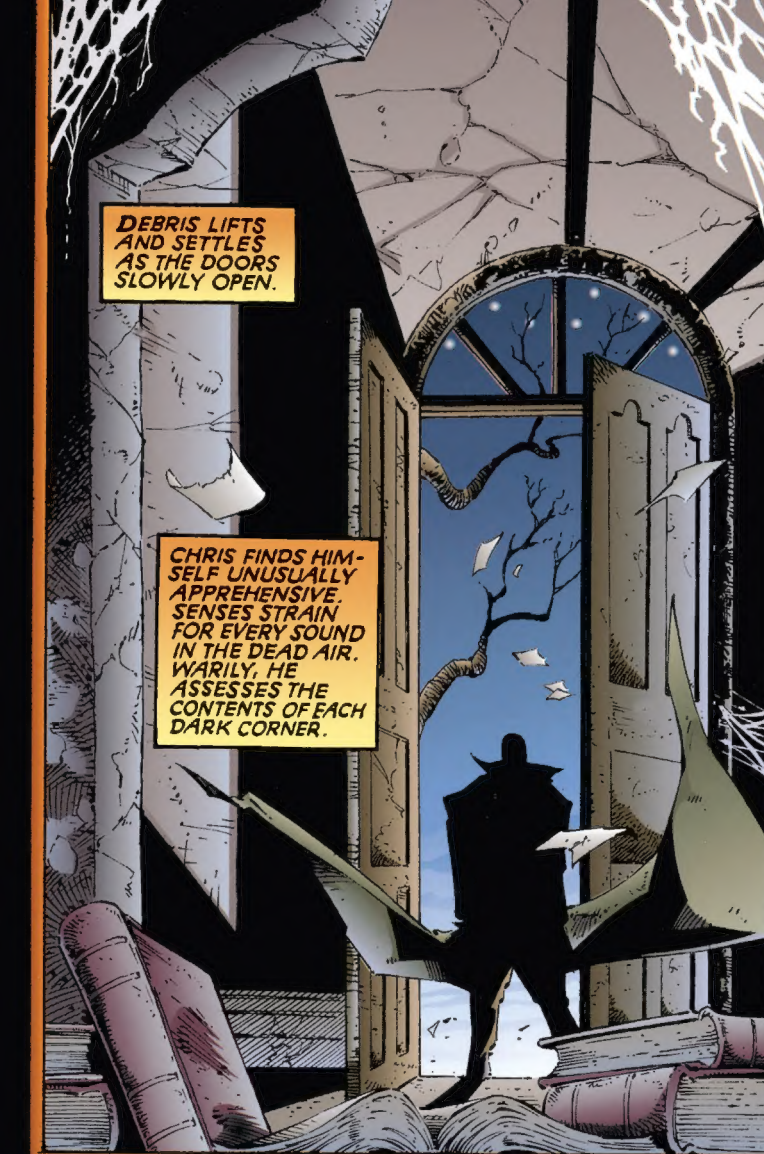
WAIT A
MINUTE. THIS
CARD'S **EXPIRED**.
YOU'LL HAVE
TO COME BACK
TOMORROW
WITH VALID
DOCUMENT-
TATION.

THAT WON'T BE
NECESSARY.

THE GUARD'S MUFFLED
SCREAMS STOP AS THE
CRACK OF HIS BREAKING
NECK ECHOES THROUGH
THE LEAFLESS TREES.


ONCE AGAIN, SILENCE BLANKETS THE MOONLIT
EVENING, AS FADING WARMTH FROM THE DEAD
GUARD'S HAND THAWS A PATCH OF ICY GROUND.

THAT WAS
EASY.
TOO EASY.

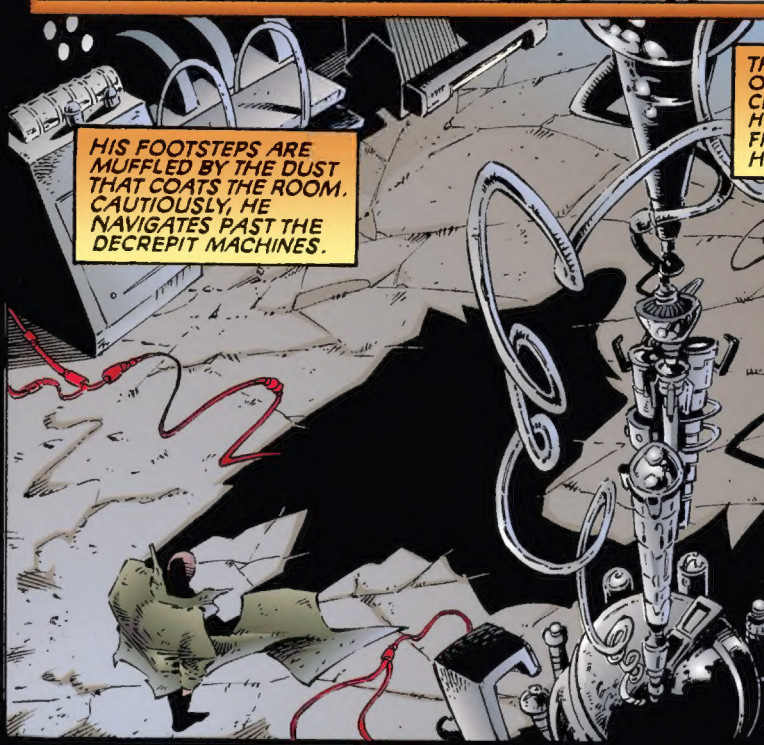


DEBRIS LIFTS
AND SETTLES
AS THE DOORS
SLOWLY OPEN.

CHRIS FINDS HIM-
SELF UNUSUALLY
APPREHENSIVE.
SENSES STRAIN
FOR EVERY SOUND
IN THE DEAD AIR.
WARILY, HE
ASSESSES THE
CONTENTS OF EACH
DARK CORNER.



WHAT
THE HELL'S
GOING **ON**
HERE...? I HEARD
THE DOC WAS A
LITTLE CRAZY,
BUT WHAT WEIRDO
COULD LIVE
WITH THIS
FILTH?

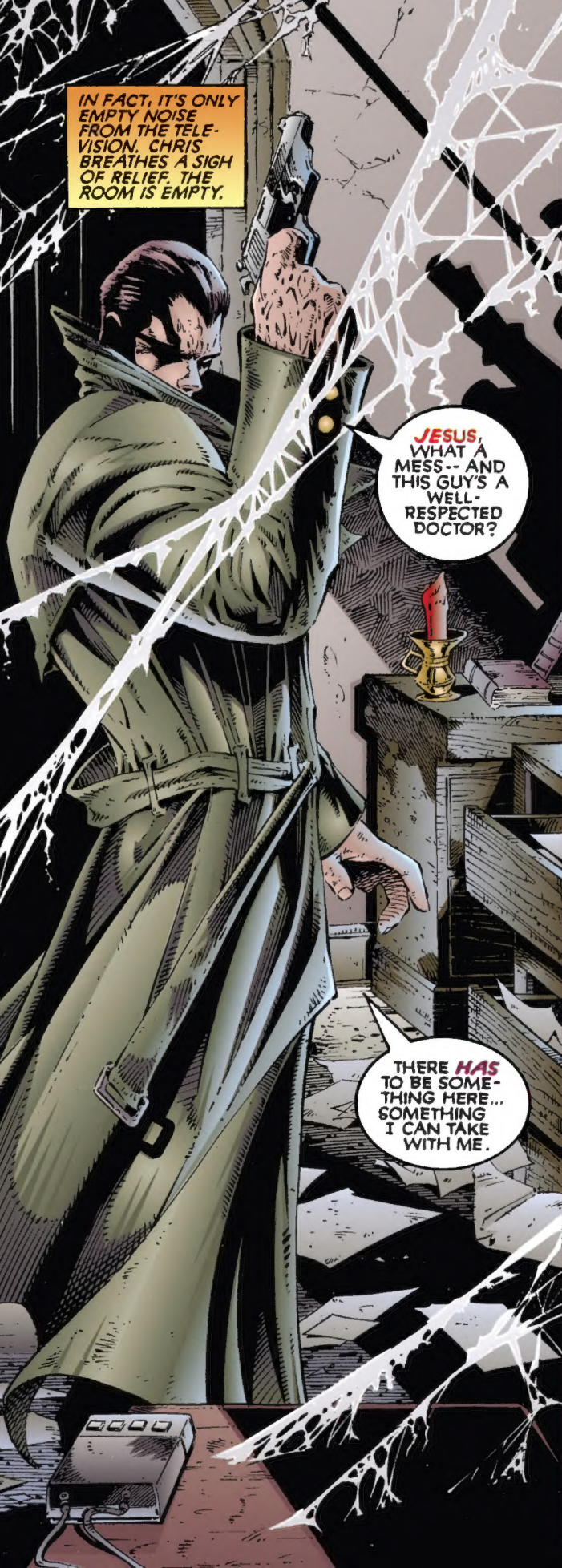


HIS FOOTSTEPS ARE
MUFFLED BY THE DUST
THAT COATS THE ROOM.
CAUTIOUSLY, HE
NAVIGATES PAST THE
DECREPIT MACHINES.

THEN-- A SIGN
OF LIFE. WARILY,
CHRIS EASES
HIS WEAPON
FROM ITS
HOLSTER.




I KNEW
I'D FIND
THAT
BASTARD
HERE.



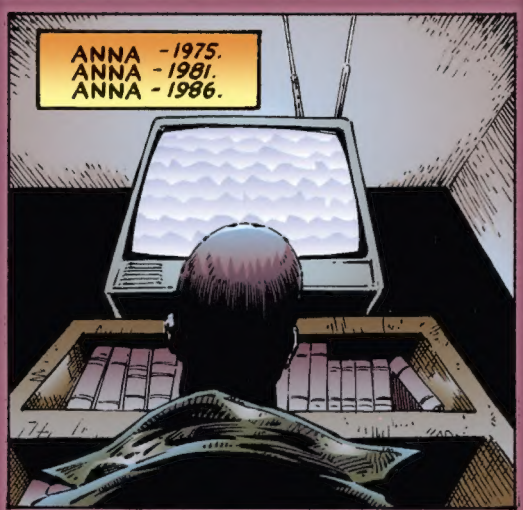
IN FACT, IT'S ONLY
EMPTY NOISE
FROM THE TELE-
VISION. CHRIS
BREATHES A SIGH
OF RELIEF. THE
ROOM IS EMPTY.

JESUS,
WHAT A
MESS-- AND
THIS GUY'S A
WELL-
RESPECTED
DOCTOR?

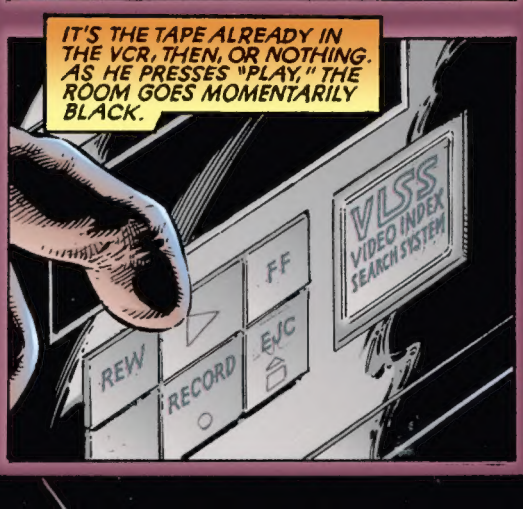
THERE **HAS**
TO BE SOME-
THING HERE...
SOMETHING
I CAN TAKE
WITH ME.



CHRIS SEARCHES
THROUGH THE
ROWS AND ROWS
OF OLD VIDEOS.
HIS ORDERS WERE
VERY CLEAR ABOUT
WHAT HE IS
EXPECTED TO FIND.
EACH TAPE, AS
PREDICTED, IS
SIMILARLY LABELED.



ANNA - 1975.
ANNA - 1981.
ANNA - 1986.



IT'S THE TAPE ALREADY IN
THE VCR, THEN, OR NOTHING.
AS HE PRESSES "PLAY," THE
ROOM GOES MOMENTARILY
BLACK.

NIGHT ENVELOPS
THE CITY. A CALM
SILENCE CARESSES
ITS EMPTY STREETS--
BROKEN BY THE
MANIC RUMMAGINGS
OF RATS AND DOGS.


AND
GHOSTS.

THE RESTLESS
CREATURE FORAGES
THROUGH MOUNDS
OF DEBRIS.

SEARCHING FOR
WHAT WILL
BRING SECURITY.

VENGEANCE.

PEACE.



GOOD.
JUST WHERE
I LEFT THEM. SOME
QUICK MAINTAINANCE
AND THEY'LL BE
READY FOR
WYNN.

THAT **SLIMY PIG!**
LYING IN SOME HOSPITAL
SURROUNDED BY
TWENTY GUARDS. YOU
SLEEP WELL, JASON. I
NEED YOU NICE AND
HEALTHY. SO I CAN
BLOW OFF YOUR
HEAD.

AN EYE
FOR AN EYE.
REMEMBER? YOU
TAUGHT ME THAT.
NEVER SURRENDER.
NEVER BACK DOWN.
**KILL OR BE
KILLED.**

**HELL'S BEEN
WAITING
FOR THIS.**

FAMILIARITY
AMPLIFIES
SPAWN'S INTEN-
SITY, AS HE
PREPARES.
EASILY WIPING
AWAY THE
GRIMY RESIDUE
OF MONTHS OF
STORAGE IN
ROTTING RUBBISH.

AK-830
ROCKET
LAUNCHER.

I REMEMBER
THIS BABY.

BLOWS
HOLES THROUGH
ELEPHANTS. **ANYTHING**.
USED IT ON THAT
LIBYAN MISSION.
WORKED LIKE A
CHARM THEN.

LOOKS LIKE
EVERYTHING'S
IN ORDER. NOW
ALL I NEED
IS...

...THE
FINAL
TOUCH.

PREPARING
FOR WAR?
YOU'VE NO
IDEA WHO
YOUR REAL
ENEMY IS.

YOU'RE
CHASING
A RED
HERRING.

BEFORE SATISFYING HIS CURIOSITY ABOUT WHAT'S ON THE TAPE, CHRIS SCOURS EVERY REMAINING INCH OF THE MANSION. HE FINDS NO ONE.

WITH MY HEALTH'S DETERIORATION, I HAVE CEASED ASSEMBLING MY NOTES, AND THE NEUROLOGY RESEARCH HAS BEEN FORCIBLY TERMINATED. WITHOUT THIS RECORDING, I FEAR MY RESEARCH WILL REMAIN UNKNOWN.

MY NAME IS **FREDERICK WILLHEIM**, AND I WAS BORN IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND.

I MUST START AT THE BEGINNING. AT THE ROOT OF MY EXPERIMENTATION.

I'M GOING TO GET A FRIGGIN' DISSERTATION.

AS A POVERTY-STRICKEN BOY, I DREAMED OF BECOMING A **DOCTOR**. WHEN WAR ENGULFED EUROPE, I SERVED AS A FRONT-LINE MEDIC IN EXCHANGE FOR TRAINING AS A PHYSICIAN.

IN MY FOURTH YEAR OF SERVICE, I MET THE WOMAN WHO WOULD FOR-EVER CHANGE MY LIFE.

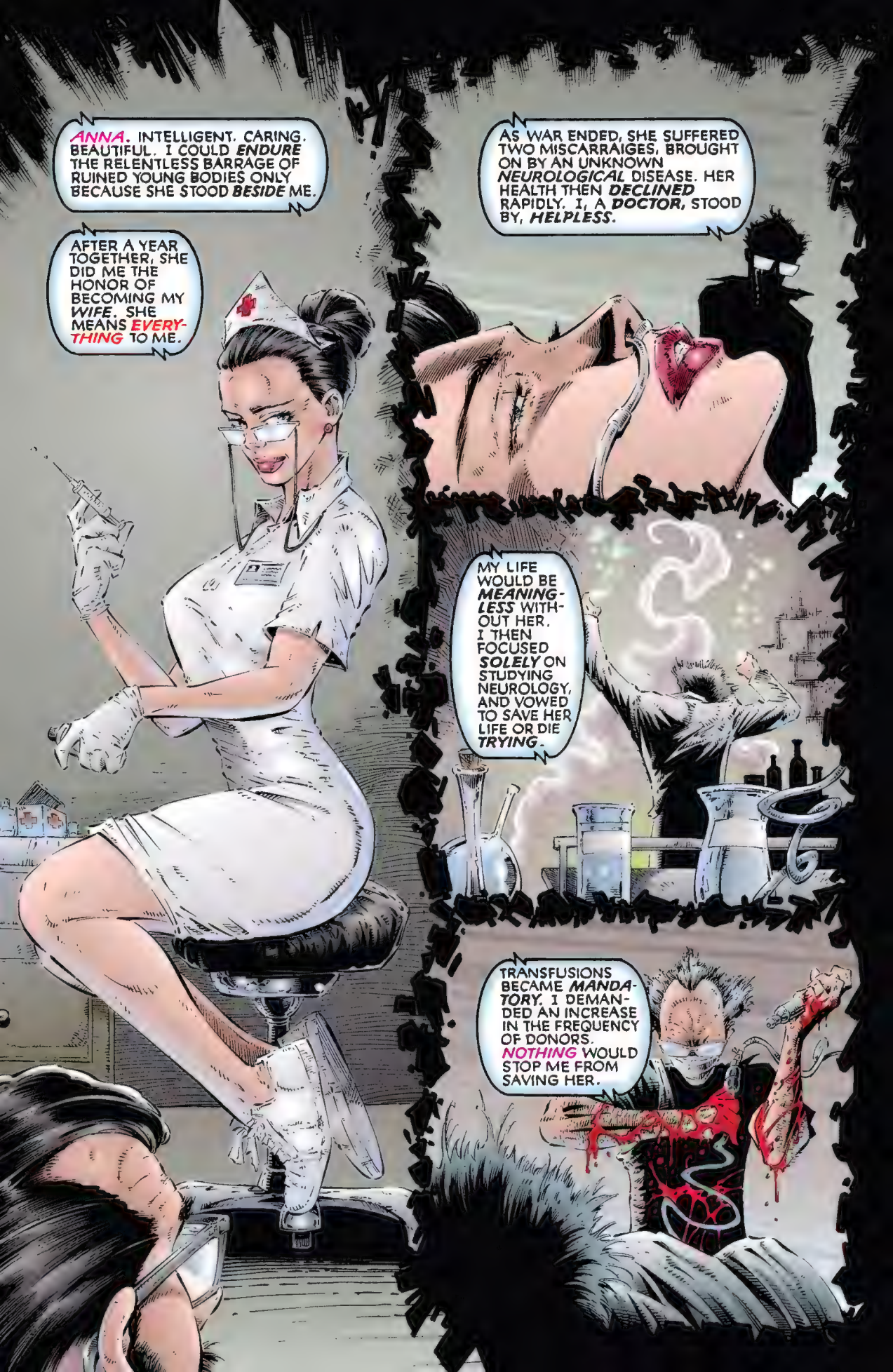
ANNA. INTELLIGENT. CARING. BEAUTIFUL. I COULD **ENDURE** THE RELENTLESS BARRAGE OF RUINED YOUNG BODIES ONLY BECAUSE SHE STOOD **BESIDE** ME.

AFTER A YEAR TOGETHER, SHE DID ME THE HONOR OF BECOMING MY **WIFE**. SHE MEANS **EVERY-THING** TO ME.

AS WAR ENDED, SHE SUFFERED TWO MISCARRAIGES, BROUGHT ON BY AN UNKNOWN **NEUROLOGICAL** DISEASE. HER HEALTH THEN **DECLINED** RAPIDLY. I, A **DOCTOR**, STOOD BY, **HELPLESS**.

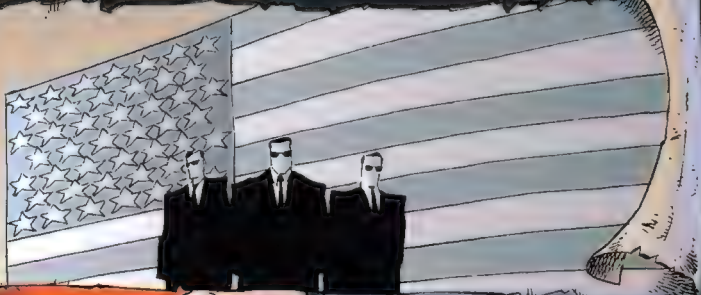
MY LIFE WOULD BE **MEANINGLESS** WITHOUT HER. I THEN FOCUSED **SOLELY** ON STUDYING **NEUROLOGY**, AND VOWED TO SAVE HER LIFE OR DIE **TRYING**.

TRANSFUSIONS BECAME **MANDATORY**. I DEMANDED AN INCREASE IN THE FREQUENCY OF DONORS. **NOTHING** WOULD STOP ME FROM SAVING HER.

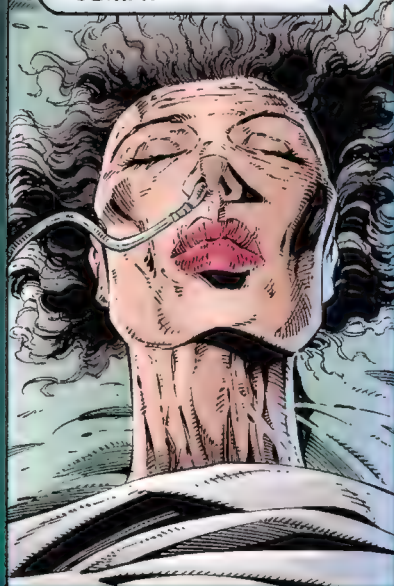


LEARNING OF MY RESEARCH, THE U.S. ARMY INVITED ME TO HEAD UP THEIR **CYBERNETIC SIMIAN** PROJECT.

I WAS FORCED TO ACCEPT THE OFFER, AS THEIR ECONOMIC SUPPORT WAS URGENTLY NEEDED IF I WAS TO SAVE HER LIFE. THEY COERCED US TO MOVE TO THE UNITED STATES.

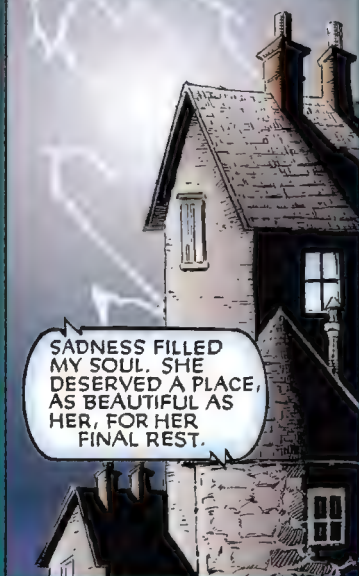


THE DEMANDS FOR IMMEDIATE RESULTS ON **THEIR** PROJECT JEOPARDIZED **HER** RECOVERY. MY SWEET, BEAUTIFUL ANNA SLIPPED INTO A **COMA**.



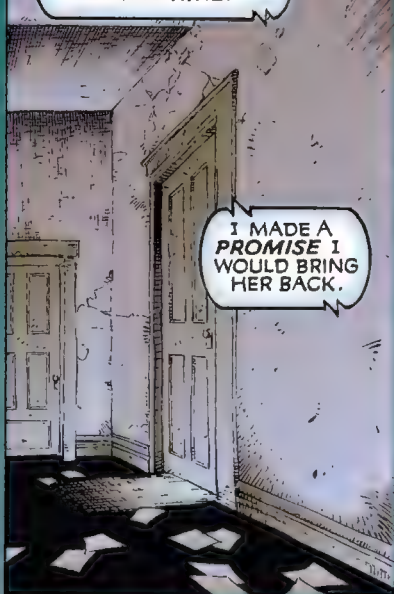
MY ANNA WAS DYING.

ONE MORNING, HER HEART STOPPED. NOTHING COULD BRING BACK ITS BEAT.



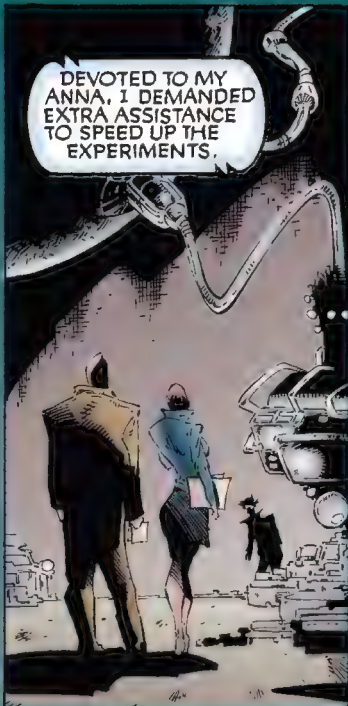
SADNESS FILLED MY SOUL. SHE DESERVED A PLACE, AS BEAUTIFUL AS HER, FOR HER FINAL REST.

A **SAFE** PLACE, WHERE I VISITED HER **ALL THE TIME**.



I MADE A **PROMISE** I WOULD BRING HER BACK.

DEVOTED TO MY ANNA, I DEMANDED EXTRA ASSISTANCE TO SPEED UP THE EXPERIMENTS.



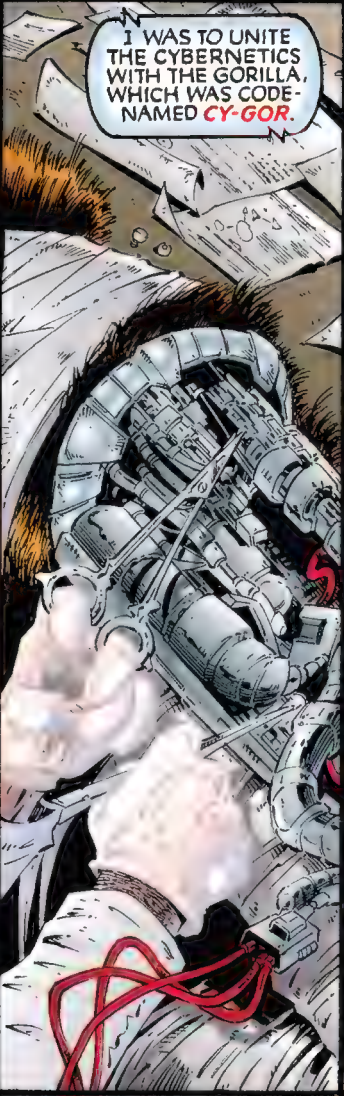
I HAD TO ENSURE MY THEORIES WERE **VALID** BEFORE I COULD HELP MY LOVE.





BELIEVING THAT CONVENTIONAL **WEAPONS** OF WAR WERE INSUFFICIENT, GOVERNMENTS RACED TO CREATE A SUPER-HUMAN **SOLDIER**.

AFTER YEARS OF ATTEMPTS TO INFUSE HUMANS WITH MULTIPLE BIONIC PARTS, RESEARCHERS CONCLUDED THAT THE HUMAN MIND COULD NOT WITHSTAND THE **PAIN** OF THE IMPLANTS. ANOTHER VESSEL WAS NEEDED. THE SIMIAN WAS CHOSEN DUE TO ITS NEUROLOGICAL SIMILARITIES TO MAN.




I WAS TO UNITE THE CYBERNETICS WITH THE GORILLA, WHICH WAS CODE-NAMED **CY-GOR**.

DUE TO THE APE'S HIGH PAIN THRESHOLD, I PROVED FLESH AND BIONICS **COULD** BE FUSED.

BUT THE GOVERNMENT DEMANDED A SUPER **HUMAN**.

I HAD TO FIND A WAY TO TRANSFER MAN'S THOUGHT PROCESSES INTO THE APE. A BRAIN TRANSPLANT WAS NOT VIABLE, DUE TO THE HUMAN **PAIN** PERCEPTION PROBLEM. SO, ATTRIBUTES OF A HUMAN MIND WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE APE IN SLOW, CALCULATED PERCENTAGES, WORKING UP TO AN IDEAL 80/20 HUMAN-TO-APE RATIO. THIS INTERESTED ME **TREMENDOUSLY**--

-- FOR I KNEW IF I COULD PLACE A MIND INTO A NEW BODY, I COULD KEEP MY PROMISE TO MY ANNA. MY LOVELY ANNA. SHE WOULD LIVE AGAIN. I **PROMISED** HER.



FOR ANNA'S SAKE, PRECISION IN MY EXPERIMENTATION WAS **MANDATORY**. HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT, WHILE DEMANDING IMPOSSIBLE DEADLINES, MADE SUBSTANTIAL CUTS TO MY **RESOURCES**.

STILL, I CONTINUED MY RESEARCH WITH THE SAME **CARE AND ATTENTION** AS ALWAYS...

...USING ONLY THE **MOST ADVANCED** EQUIPMENT AND **SOPHISTICATED** SUBJECTS.

MAKING DETAILED NOTES IN **ORGANIZED JOURNALS**.

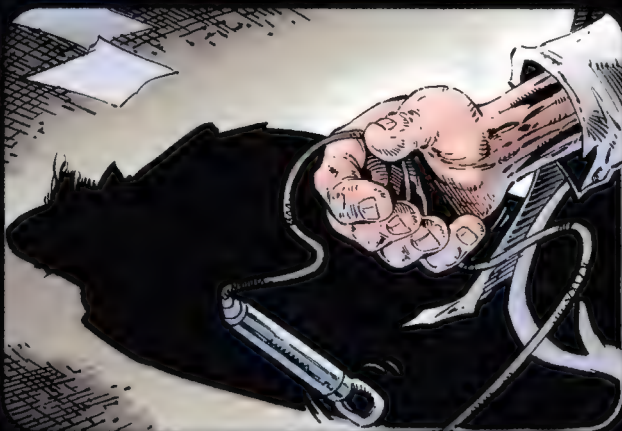
WHEN THE **CY-GOR** MOVED OF ITS OWN FREE WILL AND LIVED WITHOUT ARTIFICIAL LIFE SUPPORT, I KNEW IT WAS TIME FOR MY ANNA. I **PROMISED** HER. ALL MY HARD WORK WAS GOING TO PAY OFF. SHE WOULD, ONCE AGAIN, BE WITH ME.

DAYS BLURRED INTO EACH OTHER BECAUSE I KNEW THAT SOON ANNA AND I WOULD BE TOGETHER AGAIN. I COULD FEEL MY HEALTH DECLINING, BUT NOTHING COULD STOP ME. NOT NOW.



THAT BRINGS ME UP TO DATE.
I MUST CONTINUE MY WORK.
ANNA DEPENDS ON ME.

THE TELEVISION SCREEN FILLS ONCE AGAIN
WITH SNOW, BRINGING CHRIS BACK TO
REALITY. BELIEVING THE TAPE IS OVER, HE
RISES TO REMOVE IT FROM THE VCR, BUT
STOPS WHEN THE PICTURE RESUMES.



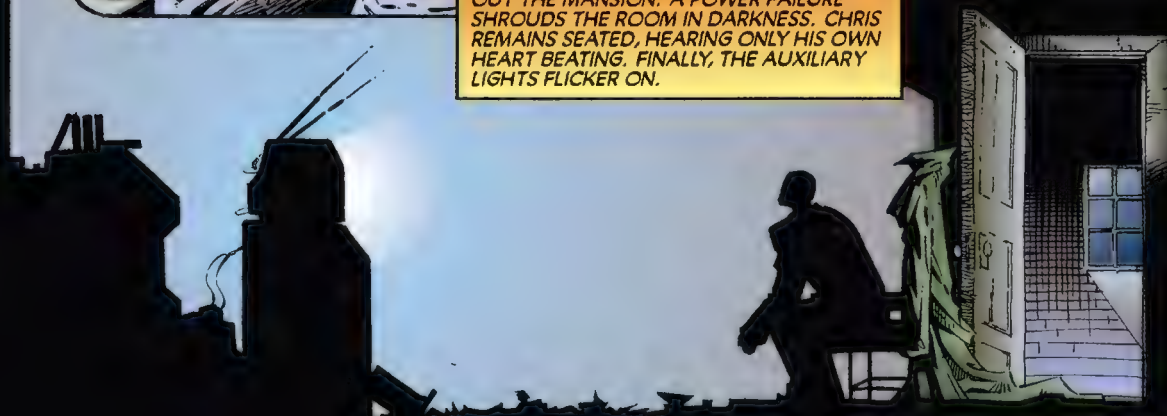
HELP ME. I'VE BEEN LYING HERE
FOR THREE DAYS. I'M WEAK. I
STRUGGLED FOR DAYS TO REACH
THE MICROPHONE.

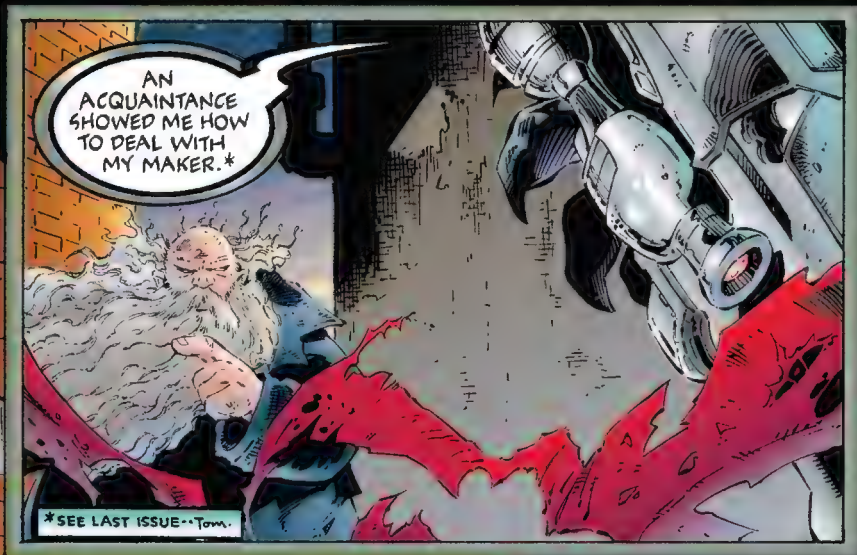
I CANNOT MOVE MY LEFT ARM,
OR MY LEGS. I'VE HAD A **STROKE**. I
CANNOT REACH HER. MY ANNA.



I'M NOT READY. NOT **YET**. THE BEAST.
AT LEAST FOUR **DAYS** HAVE PASSED.
I CAN'T MOVE. IT WILL GET...

A THUNDERING ECHOES THROUGH-
OUT THE MANSION. A POWER FAILURE
SHROUDS THE ROOM IN DARKNESS. CHRIS
REMAINS SEATED, HEARING ONLY HIS OWN
HEART BEATING. FINALLY, THE AUXILIARY
LIGHTS FLICKER ON.







NOW IS NOT THE TIME. HE'S TOO VALUABLE TO YOU. WITHOUT HIM, YOU WILL NEVER KNOW WHY YOU WERE KILLED.

DO YOU REALLY THINK WYNN HOLDS THE POWER TO HAVE YOU KILLED AT A WHIM?



YOU JUST DON'T GET IT. WYNN MADE CHAPEL PULL THE TRIGGER. NO ONE ELSE. CHAPEL TOOK THE ORDER. WYNN GAVE IT.



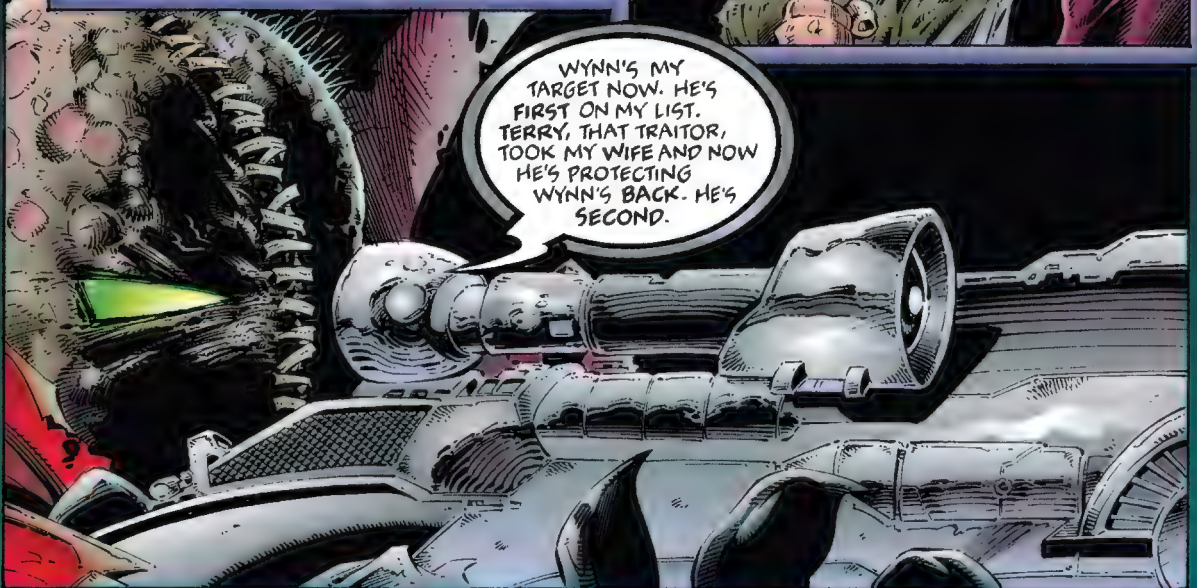
YOU WON'T BELIEVE IT. THIS GUY'S GOT A THRONE AN' EVERYTHING. LIFTS BUILDINGS, TOO. LIKE THAT GUY IN THE COMIC BOOKS. HE FLIES, BENDS STEEL AN' EVERYTHING.

COOL.

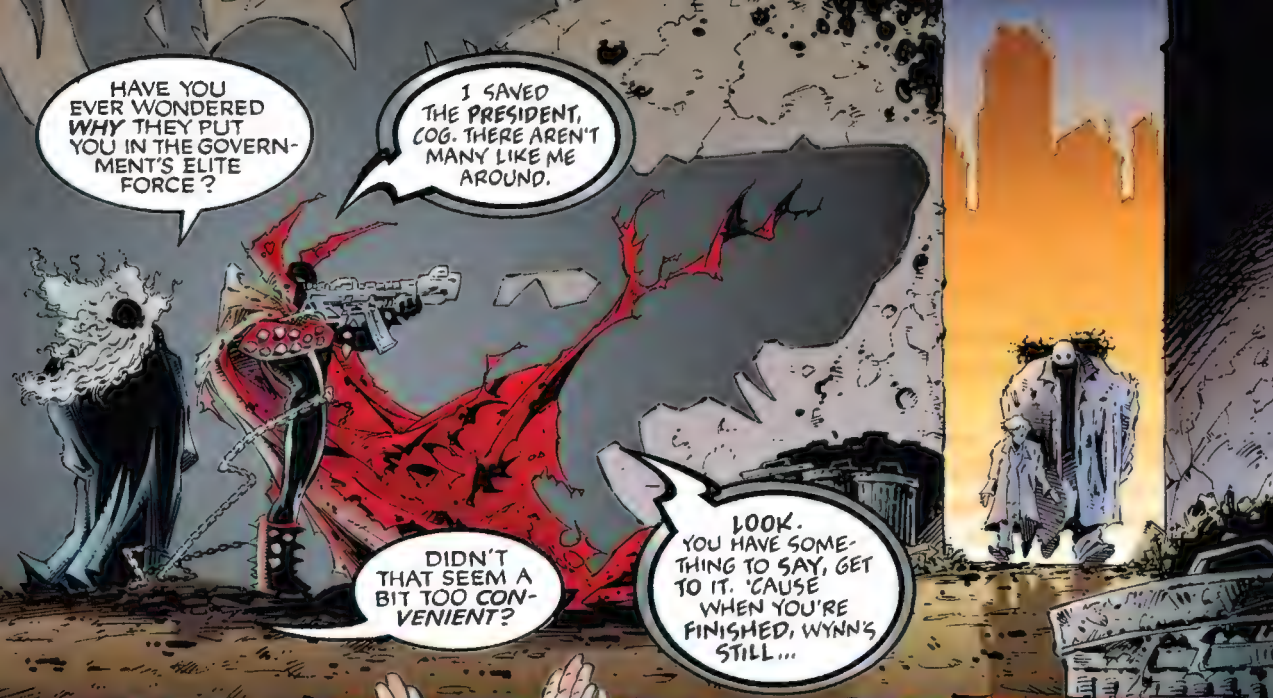


THE THRONE IS MADE UP OF ALL THIS STUFF. IT'S HUGE, MAN.

COOL.



WYNN'S MY TARGET NOW. HE'S FIRST ON MY LIST. TERRY, THAT TRAITOR, TOOK MY WIFE AND NOW HE'S PROTECTING WYNN'S BACK. HE'S SECOND.



HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHY THEY PUT YOU IN THE GOVERNMENT'S ELITE FORCE?

I SAVED THE PRESIDENT, COG. THERE AREN'T MANY LIKE ME AROUND.

DIDN'T THAT SEEM A BIT TOO CONVENIENT?

LOOK. YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY, GET TO IT. 'CAUSE WHEN YOU'RE FINISHED, WYNN'S STILL...



...GOING TO **DIE!**

AHH!

AHH!

PLEASE. PLEASE. PLEASE. PLEASE. DON'T SHOOT.




Uk?

RUN.

Oh GOD.
Oh GOD.
Oh GOD.

HEY GUYS! I...

Aw, SCREW IT.



NOW, WHAT
WERE YOU
DRIVING AT?

THAT I WAS
RECRUITED BY THE
PRESIDENT FOR SOME
SECRET AGENDA?

NO, NOT THE
PRESIDENT.
THOSE WHO
SERVE HIM.

CONSIDER HOW MUCH
EFFORT AND INFLUENCE A
TRUSTED GROUP WOULD HAVE
TO EXERT IF THEY DECIDED TO
RID THEMSELVES OF THEIR
LEADER. ALL THE WHILE THEY'D
BE PUTTING AT RISK EVERY-
THING THEY'D ACHIEVED.
YEARS OF PLANNING MIGHT BE
REQUIRED. THE CLANDESTINE
RENDEZVOUS. THE CONVE-
NIENT *ALIBIES*.


BUT WHAT IF SOME-
THING... OR SOMEONE...
INTERFERED AT THE CRUCIAL
MOMENT. THE VAST RESOURCES
INVESTED IN THE MISSION WERE
THEN *WASTED*. WORSE, THE
HIDDEN CONSPIRITORS COULDN'T
ELIMINATE THE INTERLOPER,
FOR NOW, HE... BY WHICH I
MEAN *YOU*, AL... HAD
BECOME A NATIONAL
HERO.

AT THE SAME TIME,
YOU'D BECOME *UNTOUCH-
ABLE*. IF ANYTHING WERE
TO *HAPPEN* TO YOU, THE
ENTIRE *NATION* WOULD
WANT TO KNOW WHY.
THEIR BEST OPTION, THEN,
WAS TO BRING YOU *INSIDE*
THEIR RANKS... TO KEEP
YOU UNDER 'HOUSE
SURVEILLANCE'.

YOU SEE, WHILE THEY
COULDN'T HAVE ANTICI-
PATED THE INTERVENTION
OF A BRIGHT YOUNG
OFFICER THAT *FIRST TIME*,
THEY COULD MAKE SURE
YOU'D BE NOWHERE
NEAR THE KILL ZONE FOR
THEIR *NEXT TRY*.

TRUST ME.
JASON WYNN
IS JUST A SMALL
PIECE OF A
BIGGER
PUZZLE.

...AND YOU'RE
A PUPPET, AL. AT
LEAST YOU *WERE*.
IT'S TIME YOU
STARTED THINK-
ING LIKE A *FREE*
MAN.




OBSOLETELY, HE
DICTATES HIS NOTES
ON EVERYTHING, SO
THERE SHOULD BE A
TAPE DISCUSSING
THE EXTRACTION
FORMULA.



OR AT LEAST
SOME FILES,
A DIARY,
NOTES, *SOME-*
THING.

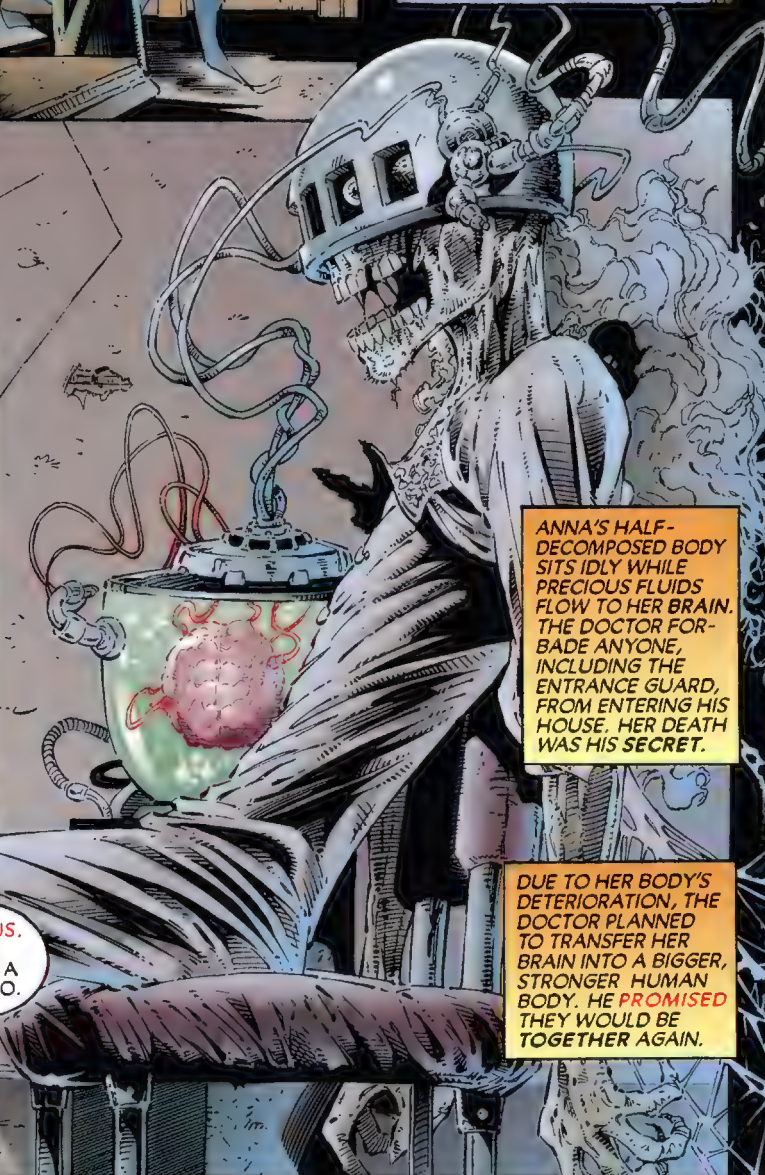


I CAN'T
GO BACK
EMPTY-
HANDED.



AS CHRIS SWINGS OPEN
THE DOOR, THE POWER
RESUMES.

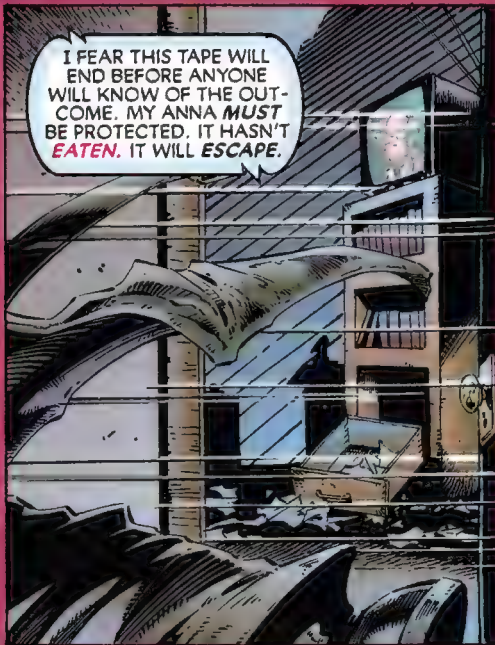
Oh MY...
WHAT
THE...



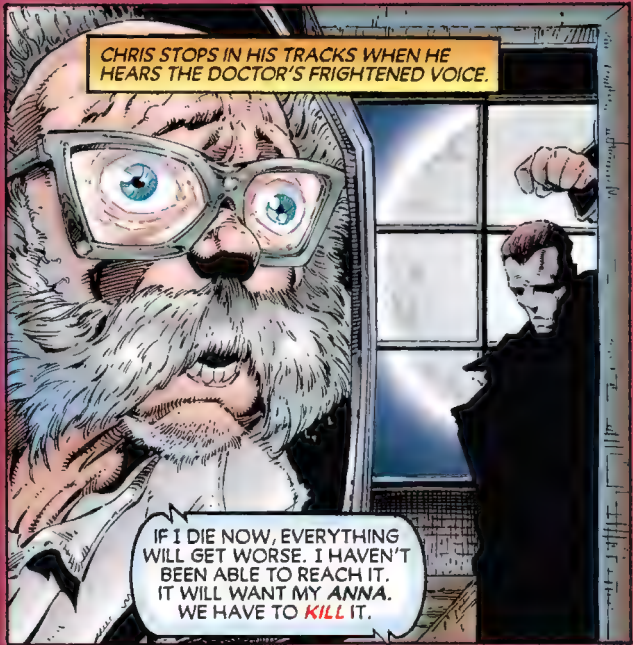
ANNA'S HALF-
DECOMPOSED BODY
SITS IDLY WHILE
PRECIOUS FLUIDS
FLOW TO HER BRAIN.
THE DOCTOR FOR-
BODE ANYONE,
INCLUDING THE
ENTRANCE GUARD,
FROM ENTERING HIS
HOUSE. HER DEATH
WAS HIS SECRET.

JEEZ-US.
THIS
GUY'S A
PSYCHO.

DUE TO HER BODY'S
DETERIORATION, THE
DOCTOR PLANNED
TO TRANSFER HER
BRAIN INTO A BIGGER,
STRONGER HUMAN
BODY. HE **PROMISED**
THEY WOULD BE
TOGETHER AGAIN.



I FEAR THIS TAPE WILL
END BEFORE ANYONE
WILL KNOW OF THE OUT-
COME. MY ANNA **MUST**
BE PROTECTED. IT HASN'T
EATEN. IT WILL **ESCAPE**.



CHRIS STOPS IN HIS TRACKS WHEN HE
HEARS THE DOCTOR'S FRIGHTENED VOICE.

IF I DIE NOW, EVERYTHING
WILL GET WORSE. I HAVEN'T
BEEN ABLE TO REACH IT.
IT WILL WANT MY ANNA.
WE HAVE TO **KILL** IT.



KILL
WHAT?

I KNOW IT HAS
GOTTEN FREE.
THREE WEEKS
HAVE PASSED. GOD
HELP WHOEVER
COMES HERE. IT
WILL BE HUNGRY.
I DON'T...



THEN,
ANOTHER
BLACKOUT.

NOT
AGAIN.



I'VE GOT
TO FIND
SOMETHING
HERE.

UNBEKNOWNST TO
CHRIS, THE DOCTOR
STRUGGLED FOR
ANOTHER SEVEN
DAYS BEFORE DYING
OF DEHYDRATION.



THIS
MUST
BE IT.

FOR THE FIRST TIME
IN THREE WEEKS.

FRESH MEAT.

A SOOTHING CHORUS OF CRICKETS SETS THE TONE AS ROSEMARY BLAKE BEGINS HER DAILY CONTEMPLATION.

GRANNIE?

AL? PLEASE, CHILD, COME IN. IT'S BEEN SOME TIME.

I'VE BEEN BUSY.

I'M SURE. THE LORD MUST HAVE MANY GLORIOUS DUTIES FOR SOME-ONE LIKE YOU.

STILL, I'M GRATEFUL FOR YOUR VISITS, NO MATTER HOW BRIEF.

NOW, PLEASE. SIT WITH ME A WHILE.

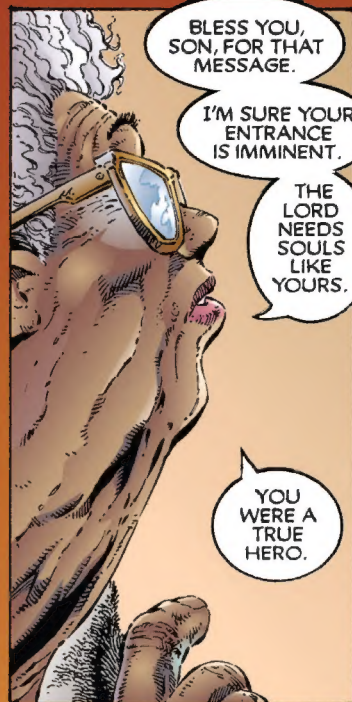
THANK YOU. I DO FEEL TIRED.



TELL ME, AL. IS HEAVEN WHAT THEY SAID IT'D BE?



I DON'T KNOW, GRANNY. I HAVEN'T BEEN THERE YET. BUT AN ANGEL DID TELL ME YOUR PLACE IN THE KINGDOM WAS WAITING. WHAT YOU'VE DONE ON EARTH HAS HONORED GOD.



BLESS YOU, SON, FOR THAT MESSAGE.

I'M SURE YOUR ENTRANCE IS IMMINENT.

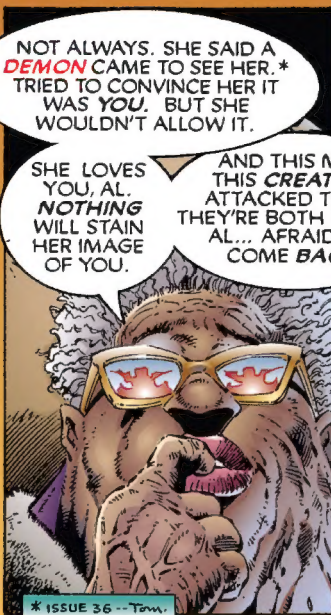
THE LORD NEEDS SOULS LIKE YOURS.

YOU WERE A TRUE HERO.



I THOUGHT SO, TOO. BUT I WAS USED. I STILL AM.

HOW ABOUT WANDA? IS SHE ALL RIGHT?



NOT ALWAYS. SHE SAID A **DEMON** CAME TO SEE HER. * TRIED TO CONVINCE HER IT WAS YOU. BUT SHE WOULDN'T ALLOW IT.

SHE LOVES YOU, AL. **NOTHING** WILL STAIN HER IMAGE OF YOU.

AND THIS MAN, THIS **CREATURE**, ATTACKED TERRY. THEY'RE BOTH SCARED, AL... AFRAID IT'LL COME BACK.



THEY TRY AND HIDE IT FROM ME, BUT I STILL SENSE IT. MAYBE YOU CAN HELP?

THERE **MUST** BE SOME WAY YOU CAN KEEP THAT EVIL MAN AWAY.

I'M TRYING.

* ISSUE 36 -- Tom



THANK YOU. NOW COME ALONG WITH ME. I WANT TO SHOW YOU A PICTURE OF HER LITTLE GIRL.





Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE